lowercase pamphlet

Beyond Time

Breaking Colonial Time and Finding Ways to Untime

Curiousism Cyphers

$7 CAD

About the Authors

The Curiousism Cyphers is an anonymous writer's collective bickering about the concept of time, justice, and autonomy. They remain anonymous to implode the cult of personality and individuality that often overshadows ideas and stories. Reach out to them at: CuriousismCyphers@protonmail.com

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Beyond Time: Breaking Colonial Time and Finding Ways to Untime

By Curiousism Cyphers

Consider green lakes
And the idiocy of clocks
Someone shot nostalgia in the back
Someone shot our innocence
— Bauhaus[1]

In 1871, during the Paris Commune, one of the first acts people collectively took was shooting out all of the clocks throughout the city, and ever since it seems the clocks have been shooting back.

Most of us are conditioned to believe that we are on borrowed time, with the tentacles of empire manipulating our bodies, and boxing us in between the tick and the tock of their Big Bens. These Bens stand phallically tall for colonial time, keeping watch like the eye of Sauron to ensure profit stays in the hands of a few.

The few hoard time, keeping it close, while they throw us scraps of contained leisure, so we can pretend to unwind from their clocks. They offer up the kind of time we can order on Amazon, or set our watches to so we can catch the new series on Netflix, or trick us into believing we are

1 Bauhaus. "Who Killed Mr. Moonlight?" Track 5 on Burning from the Inside. Beggars Banquet, A&M, 1983, CD.

the ones who control our timelines on Twitter, or worse, our lives. We stay glued to the many versions of clocks on their timeline, as they hoard the abundance of all the other timelines. All the while their timekeeper managers wind their clocks to synchronize with the alarms, keeping watch on all of us.

And these alarms do their part too; their discordant rings remind us to keep marching in stride on their docile linear-time-conveyor-belts.

But fuck these generations of overlords, and their cliches too. Time is not the problem as such; it's empire's ticking (and trickster) colonial-clocks that only show us their version of time and whose main job it is to sound the alarms to keep us in line. But how do we get unstuck from their colonial time without fracturing all time, without running out of time? How can we keep decapitating their mythologies of scarcity while reminding each other of reciprocity?

In a society overrun with weapons and violence in the hands of the ruling class that has desensitized our attention, we say enough. Let's take these power-over-us weapons, and their cousin named rhetoric, too, and not forge them into ploughshares but instead into collective explosions of empathy grenades and shrapnel of compassion. We imagine empathy grenades as wake-ups or jolts of energy to question and expose the cracks in the institutions and colonial power structures. We see shrapnels of compassion as seeds and spores to bloom new worlds. We think that through these militant acts of sabotage, which are rooted in empathy and compassion, we can truly become unstuck from these time-stealing and violent clocks.

With empire's bells smashed, the oppressive noise of our subjugation will begin to diminish, fading out their noise and opening up new ways to hear each other and experience more together.

We think this will support our abilities to reorganize and reclaim our relationships with time, whether we are slowing it down, or speeding it up. The possibilities are endless for creating new worlds, and seeing worlds already here, that are away from the deafening alarms of empire.
We think this will support our abilities to reorganize and reclaim our relationships with time, whether we are slowing it down, or speeding it up. The possibilities are endless for creating new worlds, and seeing worlds already here, that are away from the blaring alarms of empire.

Time is trending more than ever. Folks are talking about it in new and old ways. Time is often seen as colonial and this is becoming more of an accepted idea, although still on the margins. We noticed that part of this obsession with time took its height during the early parts of the pandemic in 2020. Radicals everywhere pointed out that the virus/ plague is indeed colonialism rather than COVID-19. And for many (although not all), we were caught in a kind of endless everyday where time began to feel elastic, where the conditions were such that in many ways we had more day to day control over how we spent our time. Cracks in the clocks began to happen. While it had a lot to do with work and how it shifted due to restrictions placed on us during the pandemic, we are not thinking about reclaiming time in the academic version of decolonizing time. While the need to talk about decolonizing oppressive systems is necessary, we are interested in folding in anti-

colonial tactics; as such we are aiming to talk about more than ideas alone, we are talking about the needs of the collective amidst the action to destroy empire's hold. Like Mohammed el-Kurd wrote, "Academics will talk about decolonizing rubber fucking ducks before they talk about decolonizing actual land."[2] We are for sure including our relationship with land when talking about undoing time—perhaps with a goal of achieving more collective autonomy.

While our relationship with time has shifted, at least for some, and even if we can smash the clocks to deepen these shifts, we think that together we must also reimagine and create with some caution. While this renewal of (non linear) time may heal us, it will take a profound resolve to keep it out of the grips of empire, where they only want to capitalize on (our) time. Our internal(ized) clocks will continue to tick, at least for some of us. We will need a kind of dedication whereby together we embody a fierce commitment to destroy other forces that suppress and control us. Because if we don't work to abolish empire entirely, then what happens when this reclaiming of empire time becomes colonial time again? What happens when empire's internal clocks begin to tick on—replicating and recouping its ways—and we become the clock instead? What happens when time becomes the disease again? We are not sure. But following in the steps of the Paris Commune, we do think we need to take it back one clock at a time! And we can start today, beginning where we live. These tactics must and will take hold with diversity. One way to do this is we can come together and use our collective power to lay out tripwires that hold our created empathy grenades, triggering their Big Bens to fall, opening up spaces of time for us to imagine and do more with our shrapnels of compassion.

2 el-Kurd, Mohammed. Twitter post. June 29, 2021, 12:58 p.m. https://twitter.com/m7mdkurd/status/1409949465289576451?lang=en

And why write about it? Well, as Carl Sagan once said, "Books break the shackles of time. A book is proof that humans are capable of working magic."[3]

Below are more of our musings.

Arming Ourselves with Empathy Grenades

"Drown all the clocks until there's none."
— Sparklehorse[4]

Theorists, writers, opiners, put down your pens, go outside, pull the pin and throw grenades, empathy grenades. Throw them in banks, surveillance centers, political think tanks, pundit podcasts and return the imprisoned glass windows back to sand. Roll them into schools, bureaucratic offices, fast food chains and other workplaces David Graeber would call bullshit jobs. Empathy grenades do not kill the body—these systems have already been doing that from the onset of colonialism and empire. Perhaps these empathy grenades are simply symbolic and feel cathartic to throw into institutions that dehumanize with a smile. Perhaps these grenades send shockwaves that help others see through these violent power structures that uphold empire with a phalanx of professionals with their lips pursed to say the word policy.

Maybe these grenades don't have a dramatic explosion but a realization that we never needed these institutions to thrive. Maybe the invisible explosion is a silent ripple that disrupts what William Gibson would call the "consensual hallucination" or collective hypnosis of colonial time that

3 Cosmos. "The Persistence of Memory." Video. 1 hour, December 7, 1980. https://vimeo.com/529007433

4 Sparklehorse. "Gold Day." Track 2 on It's a Wonderful Life. Capitol/EMI, 2001, CD

many are enchanted by.[5] Maybe these empathy grenades help us listen to water soaking into the soil, to the silence of the moon, and to each other, not with ears, but with our hearts? Maybe these grenades destroy cults of personality. Rolling them into writer's dens they (frag)ment egos into friendships that write together and not for a single desire.

> **Maybe empathy grenades don't explode for instant gratification, or to help the thrower or destroy the target, maybe there is no noise, just a ripple that will help future generations we will never know and not know us, anonymous help, maybe that's love.**

A help that doesn't desire to know, a helper that doesn't desire to be known.

An important sidebar: the small text on the empathy grenade reads, "side note: fascism doesn't need empathy, it simply yearns to be destroyed."

Maybe we can enter a timestream and find out.

5 William Gibson, Neuromancer (New York: Ace Books, 1994)

HYMN TO TIME[6]
by Ursula K. Le Guin

Time says "Let there be"
every moment and instantly
there is space and the radiance
of each bright galaxy.

And eyes beholding radiance.
And the gnats' flickering dance.
And the seas' expanse.
And death, and chance.

Time makes room
for going and coming home
and in time's womb
begins all ending.

Time is being and being
time, it is all one thing,
the shining, the seeing,
the dark abounding.

Planting Shrapnels of Compassion

"We learned a long time ago that
we should never subject ourselves to
the schedules of the powerful. We had to follow
our own calendar and impose it on those above."
— Subcomandante Marcos[7]

Maybe these empathy grenades release the kind of shrapnels of compassion that are the very seeds we need to co-bloom new worlds with.

6 Ursula K. Le Guin, Late in the day : poems, 2010-2014 (Oakland: PM Press, 2015).
7 Words Of The EZLN On The 22nd Anniversary Of The Beginning Of The War Against Oblivion. January 1, 2016 https://realpeoples.media/a-new-years-message-from-the-zapatistas-january-8-2016/

One of the ways to ensure we do not replicate the horrors of the past requires uncovering stories that are often marginalized. Through this active remembering, we can weave in the past to our lives today, a kind of time-weaving or time-binding. We like the idea of time-binding for this story as it is about bringing together parts of the past and binding it to the now.

As many of us continue to pull the pins today—throwing empathy grenades at oppression—we also reach through time and celebrate the empathy grenade throwers whose solidarities of resistance have always been there. We acknowledge those who weaved, and who are weaving together their stories of stopping and unbuilding the oppressive and violent walls as they were and are being built. Some did and do this by throwing with quietness between and through relationships, or throwing in erupting and public ways. Whichever way folks undo empire's hold, subtle or public, we celebrate and remember.

Their collective deeds consisted of sit-ins, blockades, and squats, while protecting land and water, all life. We Bond walking the streets while we high five the ghosts of the brave saboteurs from the diggers to suffragettes, to Zapatistas and the Wet'suwet'en. The AIM takeover of Alcatraz, the warriors at the Oka Crisis, Kanesatake Resistance, Harlan County strikers, Ludlow fighters who shot back at the Death Special, The Modoc War, the Iva Valley saboteurs, dam exploders, squatters, tree sitters, sit-in(ners), sit down(ers), blockaders, nuclear silo hammer hitters, street reclaimers, water protectors, land protectors. We peek into underground railroads, catching hope from maroons

radiating light, alongside the moon, we search out your hidden stories to gain inspiration, to learn together through time.

These shrapnels of compassion leave openings of possibilities, letting the light through like a constellation in a dark sky, showing us pathways towards remembering who we are. Possibly, shrapnels of compassion are tiny big bangs. A silent eruption or growth like the sound of the universe expanding, gas igniting but making sure the darkness is still there.

And, through this kind of unorganized time—perhaps a time that goes in all directions, a cyclical time rather than the straight arrow linear time offered to us from empire—we can join these empathy heroes, these destroyers of clocks and embracers of unorganized time and come together in the fight for collective freedom.

Reclaiming Time: Ways to UnTime

> "Don't shoot the children," I shout, "don't shoot the children!"
> But they say it's too late
> They've already been infected by time
> — Saul Williams[8]

In a society where many folks only know how to steal and how to be stolen from, what does reclaiming time look like? Is reclaiming time a mistake because it acknowledges time? Is to untime the same fallacy? Clocks are round like handcuffs, they have hands too, they tried to imprison us with their clocks. The hands of time hold the invisible one, the one that juggles capital, exploitation, and empire. According to the clock, the new day begins at night, at the stroke of midnight, when most of us are asleep.

8 Slam, directed by Marc Levin (1998; Trimark Pictures), DVD

Ricardo Levins Morales wrote, "Revolutionary elder Grace Lee Boggs would often ask, 'what time is it on the clock of the world?' Let's talk about where we are on the clock of the police abolition movement and how that intersects with the internal logic of the police system itself."[9] As suggested by Morales, instead of making clocks for abolition and to countdown the end of imperialist white supremacist capitalist childist ableist patriarchy, in 1947 the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists made a metaphorical clock deemed the Doomsday Clock. In 1949 when Russia detonated its first atomic bomb the clock went from seven minutes to three minutes to midnight.[10] Obviously this clock is an empire clock and has a complicated relationship with honesty and a loving relationship with propaganda. The clock struck midnight in Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 and again in Nagasaki on August 9, 1945 killing hundreds of thousands, desecrating the environment and causing health problems to this day.

Yes, there is a Doomsday Clock, but for whom?

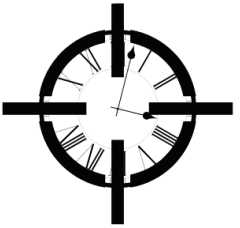
Let's pretend this clock is honest:

If so it would have struck midnight in 1492
It would have struck midnight when the Mayflower's
Shadow descended Cape Cod's shore in 1620
It would have struck at Wounded Knee, at Sand Creek
The bells would be echoing right now for seven generations
upon seven generations for the Doomsdays that
colonization creates.

9 Ricardo Levins Morales, "What Time is it on the Clock of the Police Abolition Movement?." Ricardo Levins Morales Art Studio, April 22, 2022, https://rlmartstudio.wordpress.com/2022/04/22/what-time-is-it-on-the-clock-of-police-abolition/

10 "Who sets the Doomsday Clock?", Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, accessed August 06, 2022, https://thebulletin.org/virtual-tour/who-sets-the-doomsday-clock/

Even while empire is calculating its death, now at 100 seconds to midnight, empire is still using a clock for its own demise because it can't think of any nonlinear solutions but to calculate its own doom instead of making ways to count on each other. Our hope is to abolish clocks hitting midnight, no more chimes of death but the rustling leaves of hope.



How do we get unaddicted to clocks? Ask a tree what time it is.

Part of the way empire keeps us looped into their narrow time is to have us believe that history is forgotten. But, historical amnesia is a disingenuous term. It suggests people knew history, that history was known and is something to be universally known but was forgotten. Like colonialism, the term seeks entitlement of being the all-knowing even for histories it sought to genocide but conveniently forgot. Unlike empathy grenades, empire throws flashbangs of forgetting through its airways, (a)bsent (m)emories on AM radio, (f)alse (m)emories on FM radio. White supremacist capitalist imperialist childist patriarchy doesn't have a genuine history(ies) it would be honest to acknowledge in order to forget.

Even empire tries to convince us they get it. In 2019, a Norwegian island announced they would abolish time so they could do what they want when they want. It was later announced this was a publicity stunt to get more tourists to the island.[11] Only capitalism would shoot blanks at its clocks in an attempt for attention and profit, not knowing it was tiptoeing out of a prison only to throw away the key and go back into its self-made cell.

11 John Henley, "The Norwegian island that abolished time: 'You can cut the lawn at 4am'", The Guardian, June 20, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/20/sommaroy-island-norway-attempt-create-first-time-free-zone

We can also find some hints on how to get unaddicted to clocks or untime by reading fiction. In The Left Hand of Darkness by Ursula K. Le Guin, the Foretellers are folks who can see the future when they work collectively. They are seen as 'Time Dividers', existing all at once in many times and live a life in "unorganized time." The Foretellers, then are held up as the most sacred beings in that story. Most of us know what it feels like to be in many timelines at once, through nostalgia, planning for the future, remembering. Yet, it is shrouded as something weird, and not real.

> **We can also recover other ways of being with time by looking to more-than-human friends and the past, because the way to embrace this kind of time is around us, and in our histories.**

We look to the wolves who walk with the slowest. The Celtic who don't break years into months but between solstices, the dark time and the light time. The Algonquin people who say, "things take as long as they take."[12] Let's bury deadlines and work together on lifelines.

When the cloak of colonial time is cast away, prisons will crumble as well. Our friends will no longer serve time, do hard time, and time won't be taken away from our loved ones.

We believe empathy grenades and shrapnel of compassion also have the potential to disrupt imprisoned moments of time. Instead of time that should only be embraced let these reverberations disrupt the wardens and prison workers of time. The metronomes, the

12 Evan Pritchard, No word for time : the way of the Algonquin people (Tulsa: Council Oak Books, 1997), ix

quantizers, the Pro Tools, the Rolex, the calendars based on emperors, the ticks and the tocks that represent an "order" that has fooled us into believing we are late, we are early, we are fired, that imprison our fingers to type "sorry for the late reply" and "best regards."

Empathy grenades are true solidarity, they aren't the caterpillar or the butterfly, they are the chrysalis, helping others fly.

With this essay, we don't feel we are coming up with anything new, but rather striving to bring to the forefront some forgotten or less heard stories—stories and ideas that exist in many different places on the vast time-continuum of how folks break out of the time with hands and become free. Maybe we need to embrace time like a rhythm and feel it more. Kind of like the idea of chaosmos, a Joyce coinage taken up by Deleuze and Guattari: "What chaos and rhythm have in common is the in-between—between two milieus, rhythm-chaos or the chaosmos."[13]

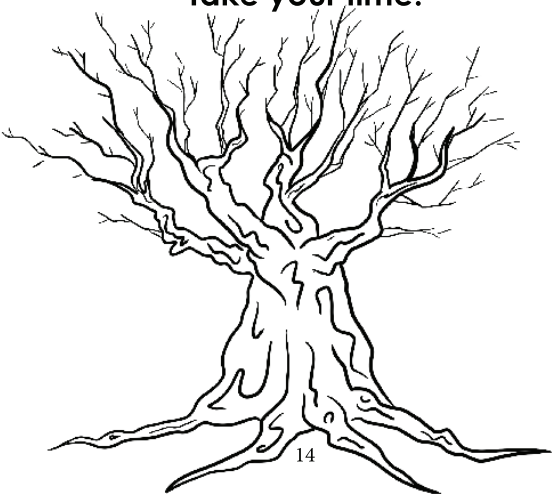
This essay isn't a call for a conference, a symposium, or an academic workshop. This essay isn't anti-intellectual nor does it require approval by PhDs or pedagogy. As Edward Said wrote, "There is no such thing as a private intellectual, since the moment you set down words and then publish them you have entered the public world." Deepening Said, we are seeking to disrupt hierarchy and stratification of thought, we argue there's no such thing as what Gramsci called an "organic intellectual", we don't need to romanticize working class people who go into libraries and read paywall EBSCO databases and distinguish them from scholars in ivory towers, some people reclaim history with their hands, ripping weeds from graves hidden by colonialism.[14]

13 Deleuze and Guattari: A Thousand Plateaus, 1980, trans. B. Massumi, 1987, p. 313
14 Unmarked, directed by Brad Bennett & Chris Haley (2021; First Run Features), DVD

While we are not ending this essay with a conclusion because we are going to stay in the middle—the in between—of these conversations, we would like to offer some of the ways we try to untime:

- Meet with someone kismetly
- Make a meeting with someone based on the moon
- Make plans or do something based on the placement of the moon or sun in the sky
- Make plans to meet a friend based on the next rain
- Make plans to do something or meet a friend for sunrise, sunset, dawn or dusk
- Make plans based on solstices
- Don't make plans and listen to see what or who appears
- Follow a toddler's lead for an entire day, or many days
- Include your dreams (asleep and awake) as time well spent
- Learn from more-than-human friends on how they interact with time
- Set the ducks free

Take your time.



Ideas + Inspiration

The lowercase press presents our pamphlet series:

where we aim to amplify kinetic ideas!

This is an invitation to collaborate with us at Listening House Media to create radical pamphlets. We think pamphlets are sometimes the perfect size for hashing out an idea and sharing it.

Do you have an idea that you'd like to explore, or one that runs through all your work/life that you'd like to zoom in on more? Sometimes we are not given the space to dig deeper into our thoughts, or perhaps to take the time to connect our praxis with our ideas. On the other hand, sometimes we have written a book or PhD thesis that has a theme/thread/idea that deserves a life of its own. Whatever it may be for you, we want to collaborate to amplify your kinetic ideas!

"Listening is not a reaction, it is a connection."

— Ursula K. Le Guin

Contribution Details:

Length: typically anything from 1000 to 5000 words can work.

Topics: we are open and love stories of everyday thriving! But as a radical pamphlet series, we are looking to amplify ideas that are rooted in justice and freedom for all. If you are unsure, email us and run your idea(s) by us.

Timeline: the publishing of pamphlets will be two times a year

The pamphlets are 5 X 7 (inches), and look cool!

Payment:

In the spirit of mutual aid and solidarity, a central goal for us is to pay you fairly for your work. But because we are new, we are going to have to figure this out as we go, and that's why this is an invitation to collaborate with us rather than you all submitting to our project. Our goal is to ensure everyone gets paid for their work while extending mutual aid to the readers, and offering the pamphlets on a sliding scale/at a low price. With this in mind, we can pay an agreed upon honorarium. The short of it is: we are not in this for profit -- we just want to also get paid a bit for our work, and cover costs, and pay you more than you would be paid in a typical setup like this.

Notes and Acknowledgements

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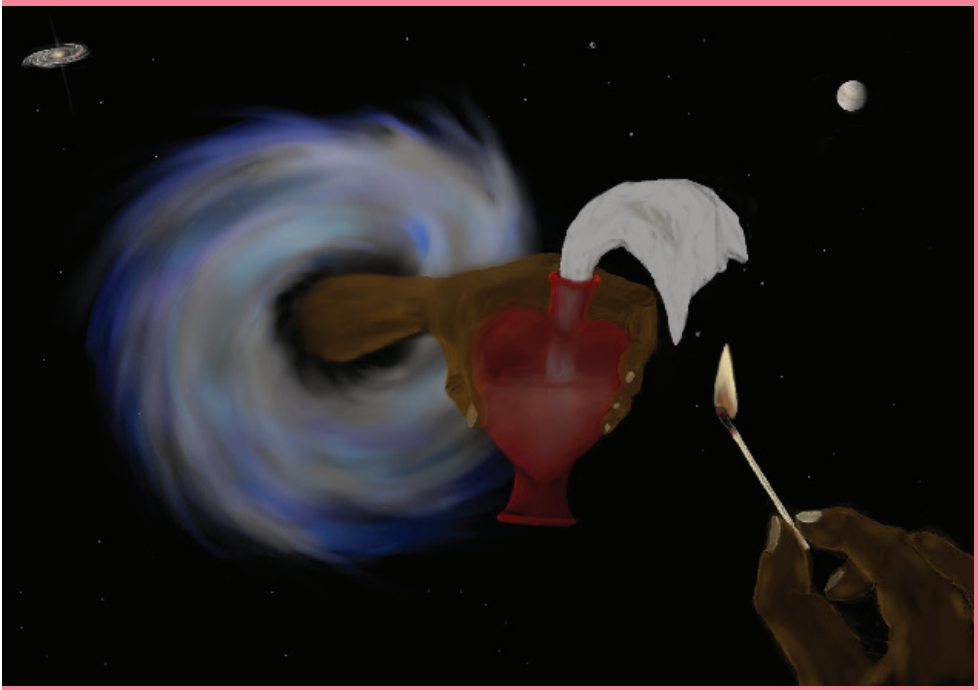
Thank you dear readers, organizers, and dreamers!

Our Pamphlets to date:

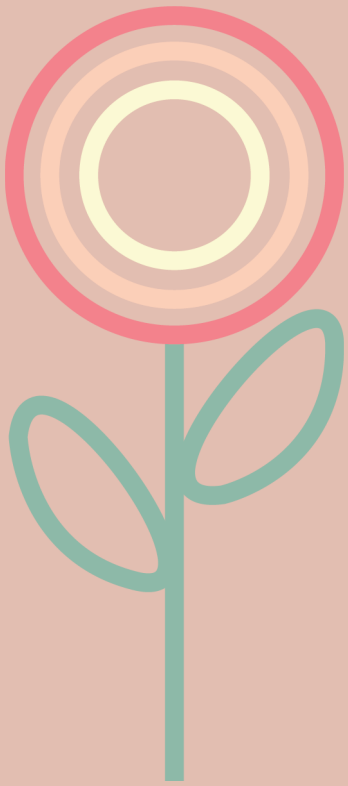
- *Abolish All Prisons: Examining The Roots,* is written by Tionne Alliyah Parris for a series focused on Prison Abolition accompanied with an introduction by Dr. Gerald Horne
- *(un)sane: a collective story | a collection of stories*, by kitty lu bear
- *Beyond Time! Breaking Colonial Time and Finding Ways to Untime* by The Curiousism Cyphers
- *New Bones: Abolitionism, Communism, and Captive Maternals* is an essay written by Joy James
- *Sentences Written Over Time* is a contribution to the lowercase pamphlet series from Jacob Wren.
- *Just anarchy: a conversation between carla bergman and scott crow* (also available in audio)

The writing, creation, and curation of each pamphlet happens from around the world, but Listening House Media is located on the occupied lands of the xwm θkw y m (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and s l ílw ta /Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh peoples. Also known as Vancouver, BC.



"There are no new ideas. There are only new ways of making them felt."

— Audre Lorde



Thanks for reading and amplifying kinetic ideas

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